

Congressman Dent addresses theft of records from Veterans' Administration

“Since being elected to Congress, supporting the needs of veterans has always been one of my major priorities. Today, I want to you to inform you of a very serious issue which may require your immediate attention.

As you may know, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has discovered that data containing sensitive information, including social security numbers and dates of birth, for up to 26.5 million veterans was recently stolen from the home of a Department employee. You will shortly receive a mailing that includes a statement from the Department of Veterans Affairs explaining this situation in greater detail. I have also included a page of frequently asked questions (FAQ's) regarding the recent theft and suggestions on how you can protect yourself from any potential impact.

I believe it is also important to make you aware that the VA has set up a toll-free telephone line to provide more detailed information. I encourage you to take advantage of this resource and contact the VA with any questions or concerns you may have about your personal information. The number is: 1-800-FED-INFO (1-800-333-4646).

On 22 May 2006, I had the opportunity to speak directly with U.S Attorney General Alberto Gonzales in Allentown while this issue was unfolding. During my discussion with the Attorney General, I insisted that every protection be afforded to veterans impacted by this unfortunate event. In addition, I recently cosponsored the Veterans Identity Protection Act, which was introduced in the U.S. House of Representatives by Rep. Marsha Blackburn (R-TN). This bill will require the VA to provide a free credit report every three months over the course of a year and also make available one year of free credit monitoring to every veteran whose personal information has been compromised.

I have the utmost respect for our nation's many veterans, and I am extremely proud of and thankful for the work you have done to protect our freedom. Please do not hesitate to contact me with any additional questions or comments you may have involving this or any other federal issue.”

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